

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, 10 July 2024 – 7 pm

Monroe County Museum
126 South Monroe Street
Monroe, Michigan 48161

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes from Regular Meeting of 8 May 2024
5. Public Comment
6. Committee Updates
 - 6.1. Executive Committee
 - 6.2. Awards Committee
 - 6.3. Building Committee
 - 6.4. Markers Committee
 - 6.5. Projects Committee
7. New Business
 - 7.1. MCMS Reports
8. Old Business
 - 8.1. Actionable Objectives Discussion: Develop and Implement a Collections Storage Plan
9. Public Comment
10. Board Comments
11. Adjournment

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, 14 August 2024 @ 7 pm
Monroe County Museum
126 South Monroe Street
Monroe, Michigan 48161

2024 MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES	2024 COMMITTEES
Chair Brian Egen, District 6 Vice Chair Jeremy Potter, District 1 Secretary Michael Humphries, District 8 Immediate Past Chair Hobby Nels Trustee Emeritus Richard Micka Trustee Thomas Heywood, District 2 Trustee Mary Strevel, District 3 Trustee L William Conner, District 4 Trustee Michelle LaVoy, District 5 Trustee Anne Noland, District 7 Trustee Nick Guthrie, District 9	Executive Committee Chair: Brian Egen Members: Jeremy Potter, Michael Humphries, Hobby Nels, Andrew Clark, and JJ Przewozniak Awards Committee Chair: Michelle LaVoy Members:, Thomas Heywood, Anne Noland, Mary Strevel, and Andrew Clark Markers Committee Chair: Jeremy Potter Members: Brian Egen, Nicholas Guthrie, Michael Humphries, Lynn Reaume, and Andrew Clark Projects Committee Chair: Michael Humphries Members: Bill Conner, Brian Egen, and Andrew Clark

Mission Statement of the Monroe County Museum System

At the Monroe County Museum, we fuel and cultivate our visitors' curiosity through the exploration of Monroe County's rich and varied stories, joining together to unearth meaning and illuminate relevant connections between the past, present, and future.

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM
BOARD of TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES
May 8th, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
at the Monroe County Museum, 126 South Monroe Street, Monroe

Present: Brian Egen, Chairman	Michael Humphries, Secretary	William Conner, Member
Nick Guthrie, Member	Tom Heywood, Member	Michelle LaVoy, Member
Richard Micka, Emeritus	Hobby Nels, Past Chairman	
Anne Noland, Member	Mary Strevel, Member	

Excused: Jeremy Potter, Vice-Chairman

Museum Staff: Director Clark J.J. Przewozniak, Deputy Director Lynn Reaume, County Historian

Guest: Jeanne Micka, Sawyer Homestead

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m., roll was called, and there was a quorum.

Approval of the Agenda: motion was made to accept the agenda by T. Heywood, seconded by H. Nels, and passed.

Approval of Minutes of April 10th, 2024 Meeting: M. Humphries made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as published, seconded by N. Guthrie, and passed.

Public Comment #1: none

Committee Updates: Executive: Chairman Egen said the group has not met.

Spirit of Service Awards Committee: Chairperson LaVoy said they have the applications in-hand, and will meet possibly after this meeting.

Building Committee: Chairman Egen said the group had not met. Director Clark said there were two respondents, both not local, though there was a local interest. There is no budget yet for the feasibility study, possibly costing \$70,000, though a lower sum was suggested by a local company. Such a study will define the logistics & specifications for a museum building addition. Though not yet stipulated, approx. 8,000- 12,000 square feet would be a target. This addition would be ‘purpose-built’ and have multiple uses for the space. Director Clark will talk with M. Bosanac to discuss a commitment of funds and recommendations.

Historical Markers Committee: See Director’s report for update. It is expected that 12 more markers will be sent in June to Sewah Foundry for repainting.

Projects Grant Committee: Chairman M. Humphries said there were a request of \$70,000 for the total \$60,000 award grant. He noted that the Monroe County Historical Society (MCHS) is seeking an extension to their past grant award. There was a motion made to support an extension by W. Conner, seconded by T. Heywood, but with discussion, the motion was withdrawn by both parties and talk went on. There was discussion about the status of the award and society.

Chairman Humphries made a motion for a letter to be sent to their board requiring a detailed list and timeline for proposed progress, since it hadn’t advanced. This was seconded by N. Guthrie and was approved, with no abstention.

New Business: Staff Reports: T. Heywood made a motion to accept the reports as presented, seconded by M. Strevel, and approved.

Old Business: Director Clark spoke to the topic 'conflict of interest' and spoke of several resources to read from Museum publications about these standards. It is hoped to clarify the county statement with museum specific language; plus the museum will have its own statement. There will be future discussions. Motion was made to consider this topic by N. Guthrie, seconded by M. LaVoy and it was passed unanimously.

Public Comment #2: none.

Board Comments: R. Micka announced a Labor History event Thursday evening.

A.Noland said the event on the 'River Raisin Legacy Project' was very enjoyable.

Director Clark said regarding Third Street storage building that the county will paint the outside wall near the near house.

Chairman Egen spoke on the 'River Raisin Legacy Project' event and said it was well attended and was the culmination of a team effort, both public and private.

With no other business to discuss, motion was made by M. Humphries to adjourn, seconded by H. Nels and the meeting was concluded at 8:05 p.m.

The next Trustee meeting is Wednesday, June 12th at 7:00 p.m. at the Museum.

Lynn W. Reaume
Acting recording secretary
6 June 2024

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM

Director's Report

Submitted by Andrew Clark, Director

Wednesday, 12 June 2024

Revised, Wednesday, 10 July 2024

Organizational Operations

County Museum

Hours of operation are Sundays through Saturdays, 10 am to 5 pm.

County Archives

Research is by appointment and via phone, mail, and email.

Territorial Park

Now open for 2024 season through Labor Day weekend. Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 am to 4 pm.

Vietnam Veterans Museum

Now open for 2024 season through Labor Day weekend. Fridays, 10 am to 4 pm.

St Antoine's Historic Site

Grounds are open year round.

Upcoming Closures

The Monroe County Museum System will be closed Thursday, 4 July for the Independence Day holiday in accordance with the County of Monroe's holiday calendar.

The Monroe County Museum System will be closed the afternoon of 23 July for county mandated training.

Maintenance and Operations

Museum and Archives

New first floor photocopier has finally been delivered and installed.

A contractor has been lined up to address the ongoing issues with the front doors. The start date is to be announced.

The contractor completed his work and both front doors have regained full functionality.

As part of a concrete improvement project across various county sites, some areas of concrete around the county museum were replaced.

The front office was reconfigured to better accommodate the programs staff and for the return of a staff break area/meeting area.

After a small security incident, a couple repairs and enhancements were made for staff and visitor safety. A lock regained functionality and an accordion gate was reinstalled in basement to prevent visitors from gaining access to the unsecured area outside of the workshop; visitors now only have the option to either go back up the elevator or the steps.

Territorial Park

Several site enhancements have taken place around Papermill School:

All of the windows broken by the spray of gravel have been repaired and reinstalled. Staff placed planters and flowers in front of the doorway to the school to, hopefully, deter another incident.

A new walkway was poured between the school and preexisting concrete pad. A new concrete pad was created for the three seasons portable toilet.

A new portable AC unit was installed in the school to provide a small degree of refuge in the event of extreme summer heat for visitors and staff. A new mini fridge was installed to ensure that there is always ample cold drinking water onsite for visitors and staff. Additional picnic tables have been ordered and are expected to be in place within the next couple weeks. One will be for down by the creek and one will be in a secluded location to provide a shaded spot for staff during their breaks.

All padlocks except for the gate were replaced.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Museum

Opening on 24 May did not go as planned. We suspected something wasn't exactly right as it appeared that sometime in the winter sand and debris had come up through the floor drains in both bathrooms. When the plumbing contractor came in to dewinterize the bathrooms, a pool of black ooze emerged from the drains whenever the toilets were flushed. As the contractor wasn't equipped to clear the pipes, another plumber with the what we thought was going to be the right equipment came to clear them. After scoping and finding debris and blockages and wastewater pumping into a pit that it shouldn't be, another separate contractor was brought in to jet the lines. During this work it was discovered that there was a grease blockage which they then broke down. While grease isn't normally - or ever - emptied into the bathrooms at the Vietnam Veterans Museum we suspect the culprit may be our next-door neighbor, Wendy's. Anyways, after about three weeks of bringing in plumbers, the museum finally opened for seasonal operations on Friday, 7 June.

While babysitting the plumber, I discovered that about a half dozen needles and the remains of a crack pipe had been secreted between a small pile of bricks in front of the tool shed that the veterans use to store the odds and ends that they use for the upkeep of the memorial. I called central dispatch and a sheriff's deputy cleaned it up and said that he'd put in a request to increase patrols out there. As I've been out at the site for more than a decade now, this was the first instance of this kind of drug paraphernalia

being found around the museum and bathroom buildings that I can recall. For the moment I'm just considering it an isolated incident but we're monitoring the area regularly as a precaution. If there is an uptick with this sort of debris, I think a reevaluation of our role at the site is in order.

The visible homeless issue continues at Heck Park. It doesn't appear that anyone is using the pavilion behind the museum as an encampment this year but the gazebo has been regularly occupied by an older man who migrates around the park during the day.

St Antoine's Historic Site Memorial

Nothing to report.

Exhibits

A few artifacts have been moved into the south lobby cases.

Awards Program

Committee report will be given during the meeting.

Building Program

A very significant amount of progress has been made regarding the feasibility study.

Following last month's meeting, I had the opportunity to meet with both of the firms that had submitted RFPs to see what could be done to pare down the costs but still get us what we needed for a practical feasibility study but at a bit of a lower price point. I met NeumannSmith at their offices in Southfield and PLY+ came to Monroe. Both firms were clearly capable to provide us with what we need to get to the next steps in the process. I met with county administration and reported back on my meetings. County administration and I then had a follow-up meeting with PLY+ and they submitted a plan that knocked more than \$25,000 off of the initial proposal and county administration accepted it.

While composing my report for this month on Monday morning, PLY+ staff were on-site to begin their first day of work on the project. Based on their current timeline, the feasibility study should be wrapped up prior to Labor Day weekend.

Mike and Aundrea and I had an initial design meeting with the architects from PLY. They showed some very general design ideas to help shape the direction of the feasibility study. The draft designs included a basement and a three story addition in the parking area between the County Museum and the RRCA. Each design exceeded the 8,000 to 12,000 square foot goal of the proposal. Each design maintains a corridor between the County Museum and the RRCA. All visitor service functions would be concentrated in the new addition. One of the draft ideas included a terrace for a multiuse event space.

Currently, the architects are refining the design and incorporating the initial suggestions into the next design. They will be presenting their next design(s) towards the end of July.

Markers Program

I have nothing to provide at this time other than my initial delivery plan is behind schedule. I'm hoping to get refocused, distribute notices, and pull markers with staff over the next couple weeks and then deliver the markers prior to Sewah Studios going on their Independence Day break in early July.

Mike and Robert did a remarkable job in the removal of historical markers. In the course of one day they removed twelve markers from just about every corner of the county. *Lutherans in Monroe County* (Albain Road, Monroe Township), *St Anthony Parish* (St Anthony Road, Temperance), *Petersburg United Methodist Church* (Saline Street, Petersburg), *St Charles Church* (Swan Creek, Newport), *St Paul's United Methodist Church* (Monroe Street, Monroe), *St Joseph Sur La Baie* (Manhattan Boulevard, Erie), *Trinity Lutheran Church* (Scott Street, Monroe), *Erie and Kalamazoo Railroad* (Brown Road, Ottawa Lake), *A Storied Homestead* (Front Street, Monroe), *J Sterling Morton* (Washington Street, Monroe), *Port of Monroe* (Winchester Street, Monroe), and *Frenchtown Township* (Frenchtown Township Hall, Frenchtown Township).

Several of the posts were in remarkably good shape and are already using the all aluminum post. The concrete posts with an aluminum wrap continue to have structural issues. The post for the *Port of Monroe* had the largest ball of concrete attached to it that I think we've ever encountered. I can only assume they set the post in a karst formation and kept pouring the concrete in until it became level with the surface. (The Port of Monroe looks forward to the *Port of Monroe* being relocated to the Port of Monroe.)

Historical Projects Fund

Nothing to report at this time other than this year's applications are currently under review.

Personnel Updates

Nicholas Mester has been hired and has been brought on as a regular, part-time presenter.

Hodge Podge

Mike Trapp, executive director of the RRCA, is retiring. There will be a reception for him on Friday, 14 June from 6 pm to 8 pm. If you're interested in attending, you can RSVP at 313.410.8781.

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM

Deputy Director's Report

Sunday, June 9, through Saturday, July 6, 2024

Submitted by Jeffrey J. (JJ) Przewozniak

Outreach & Field Trips:

- On Tuesday, June 18, a bus tour group visited the museum on very short notice. Thanks to Andy and Dana for facilitating and ensuring they took fond memories of Monroe on their way to Frankenmuth.
- On Wednesday, June 19, a group of teachers from Ohio joined the Maumee Historical Society for a continuing education program at RRTP, during which we discussed the value of living history education, museum learning for elementary-age students, and other fun things.
- On Friday, June 21, a group of MCES summer-campers visited the County Museum for a scavenger hunt and a fun introduction to county history.

Territorial Park:

- On Tuesday, June 11 we had a thorough inspection of the chimney on the RRTP kitchen, which revealed some substantial shortcomings. As we review options for comprehensive modifications/repair, plans are in-process to temporarily assist the chimney in the execution of its duties, which are rarely carried out effectively. At present, cooking demonstrations have been suspended due to safety and health concerns.
- Following an entomological consultation on Wednesday, June 12, a solution to the termite discovery at RRTP is in-process. Thanks to the marvels of modern chemistry, hidden bait stations will soon be installed that will eliminate the problem effectively and economically.
- Our annual poison ivy and invasive species removal service was completed on Thursday, June 13. The aggression of multiflora rose and purple loosestrife have been dutifully checked for the year.
- General work continues at the working 1817 farmstead. Sundry chores, odd jobs, and routine work done with modern and historic methods occur almost every day to ensure that the grounds and historic environments are realistic, safe, and presentable. This month's highlights include painting the ox cart and schoolhouse steps, waging war on summer weeds in the row crops, lots of earthen oven baking practice, and a bountiful harvest of peas and currants in addition to the steady stream of radishes and onions, thanks to the staff's attentiveness to horticultural pursuits.
- On Wednesday, June 19, we had a contractor add in a little dirt to a potentially hazardous area. In addition, around that time, the park had its quarterly appointment with the brush-hog; the banks of Willow Run and the deep corners of fish camp were cleared out.

Miscellany:

- Thanks to Geoff Hoerauf for spending a day doing living history with us on Saturday June 29.

LOCAL HISTORY DIVISION Report

For May, 2024

We were open by appointment for 20 visitors, 5 walk-ins, and 24 GSMC members.

Topics included the obituaries, genealogy, French pear trees, Ilgenfritz & Greening Nurseries, Trading Post site, Ed's Service Station, Dandulin & Loranger, an address for a grandmother's house, and the old Christopher Bruckner stone house on North Custer.

Rachel processed 20 obits from 7 requests. She handled 3 phone call requests and 12 emails. When upstairs she continues to move and label the obituary drawers, plus answer requests and look up obits.

Robert had 10 outside calls and answered 9 emails. He continues processing the William Capaul collection images. He processed some FIC items including 0.40- 0.44, signs used at the Monroe Post Office.

Robert & I met with retired professional conservator Mark Gervasi who has worked for multiple museums and institutions, including the Henry Ford. We toured his studio and saw his work, including his personal art works. He will be working on some of our collection items and we hope to have great results. Stay tuned.

Accessions during May:

2024.18	Lynn Reaume: children's clothing, 2024 eclipse glasses, toys, unused COVID-19 test kits, misc.
2024.19	Dave Eby: award ribbons from Golden Harvest, and Monroe County Poultry Assoc. shows
2024.20	Barry Egen: wooden Towne Club pop crate
2024.21	Unknown mailing: Abstract for LaSalle property

Old Business Updates: I am waiting for Dr. Chenoweth to come back into his office so we can extend the loan on his work with our River Raisin Battlefield artifacts.

I have not heard any new news on our Smithsonian request to transfer of the painting 'Romance of Monroe.'

IT came over to connect our new larger bed scanner to the county network. It will be used with the laptop we have in Archives. We have a lot of use for it, especially for larger books, scrapbooks, documents, etc. Thanks to Andy for its purchase.

I am still (and will be for a while) processing the extensive Everett Payette Collection we received from the Monroe News/Gannett last year. I am moving files (yet again!) in the Archives storage room and in the reading area to make way for yet even more files as the Monroe Evening News photographs and topical files are being slowly incorporated. We have many 'pregnant' (as we call them) file boxes that just can't take another piece of paper and these are always being unburdened into another box, but that means more moving!

I had a great time with one of our recurring researchers, Dr. Jeffrey Boutain, botanist PhD. We talked a lot about the French pear trees, and shared extensive information on them and in general growing plants and the French, which also led to some other interesting topic. I greatly enjoy a shared give-and-take experience- he even grows giant pumpkins and squash and had photos. Maybe see him this year at the Harnica pumpkin weigh-off?

County Obituary page for April: 6,537 views from 758 users; all events 14,486
County Obituary page for May: 6,419 views from 692 users; all events 14,103.

Lynn W. Reaume, County Historian
6 June 2024

LOCAL HISTORY DIVISION Report

For June, 2024

We were open by appointment for 20 visitors, 7 walk-ins, and 20 GSMC members.

Topics included the obituaries, genealogy, plat maps, Berlin township, John Strong, Johnson-Phinney house, Roy Tanadish, Couture, Reeves, house research, Judge Seitz, St. Mary's Park bandshell (did it have plaques on it at one time?) the KKK and other topics.

Rachel processed 61 obits from 13 requests. She handled 4 phone call requests and 19 emails. She continues to work on the obituary drawers, plus answer requests and look up obits. Surnames included Reisdorf, Baker, Gerdes, Ash, Sutherland.

Robert had 18 outside calls and answered 17 emails. He transported conservation candidates to Conservator Mark Gervasi for consideration- the Durocher rocking chair being the only that fit Mr. Gervasi's criteria. He constructed two more rocking racks for the MEN topical file storage, and watched a webinar by Gaylord Archival concerning book preservation.

The Durocher rocking chair was completely dismantled and reassembled, with many of its parts refitted, clamped, and the old inappropriate methods (adhesive tape!) having been removed. The chair and other items were brought back by Mr. Gervasi and friend Jim Chase on June 19th and the chair back went back on display. He also did a walk-through the museum to identify possible conservation candidates for the next session.

Another triumph for conservation! On June 26th we were able to go to Cleveland OH where the original painting of the Arvin (then Royal) Potter homestead was cleaned and conserved. It was painted by a family member, Homer Potter and this house was one included in 'Legacy of the River Raisin', unfortunately for its poor condition at the end of its use and subsequent demolition. But the decades of soot, soil, dust, etc. did not let its wonderful colors shine through like it does today. Thanks to the millage and Director Clark for having these projects (and the Custer guidon) continue to be the assets that they are!

Accessions during June:

2024.22	William Smith, Jr: MAECO Management Club pen set
2024.23	Todd Rinness: Monroe High School & Hollywood School materials; Monroe Jr. High and Cantrick Jr. High items.
2024.24	Diane Groulx: Oral history on Rosella Langton, and property abstract
2024.25	Beth Grna: Witt family children photograph
2024.26	William Smith, Jr: Monroe and area related bank checks; NAPA & La-Z-Boy logo items
2024.27	Doug & Sib Meisner: Homemade wooden farm snow plow, drawn by tractor (or horse)

Old Business Updates: Dr. Chenoweth signed the River Raisin Battlefield artifact loan extension til December (or to be returned earlier.)

Everett Payette Collection: nearing 4,000 photographs, and that does not count the duplicates, and addition of negatives.

And other things I did not write down...

County Obituary page for June: 6,135 page views.

Lynn W. Reaume, County Historian
3 July 2024